

O 061236Z MAY 08
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL DUBAI IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 047627

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/06/2033

TAGS: [KNNP](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [MNUC](#) [TH](#) [KS](#) [TC](#) [XB](#) [XC](#) [XE](#)

SUBJECT: S) SHIPMENT OF ANHYDROUS HYDROGEN FLUORIDE,
POSSIBLY OF SOUTH KOREAN ORIGIN, FROM THAILAND TO IRAN

REF: A. STATE 3743

[1](#)B. ABU DHABI 52

[1](#)C. ABU DHABI 70

[1](#)D. ABU DHABI 178

[1](#)E. HINES-SIDLER E-MAIL 4/01/2008

[1](#)F. HINES-FELIPE E-MAIL 4/28/2008

Classified By: ISN PDAS Patricia A. McNerney,
Reasons 1.4 (b), (c), and (d)

ACTION REQUEST

[1](#)1. (S//REL ROK) FOR SEOUL ONLY: Post is requested to approach appropriate-level ROKG officials regarding a shipment of possibly South Korean-origin anhydrous hydrogen fluoride from Thailand to Iran and request that the shipment be recalled. Post may draw from background, objectives, and talking points below as appropriate.

[1](#)2. (S//REL UAE) FOR ABU DHABI ONLY: Post is requested to inform appropriate-level UAEG officials of the involvement of a South Korean firm in the transfer of AHF from Thailand to Iran and inform UAEG that we will ask the ROKG to have the shipment recalled.

BACKGROUND

[1](#)3. (S) In January 2008, Thai firm Power Marine Company, Ltd., attempted to ship a very large cargo of anhydrous hydrogen fluoride (AHF) from Laem Chabang, Thailand for delivery to Bandar Abbas, Iran. The AHF was loaded aboard the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL)-controlled Liberian-flagged M/V Anne E on IRISL Persian Container Line (PCL) voyage 8237. The vessel was scheduled to call at Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) on 14 January 2008 for final delivery to Bandar Abbas, Iran on 15 January 2008.

[1](#)4. (S) AHF is an Australia Group-controlled chemical weapons precursor and is included in the U.S. gas centrifuge and reprocessing watchlists distributed to the NSG. These items would, in our view, be subject to catch-all controls for nuclear purposes. AHF is also used in the uranium conversion process to make uranium tetrafluoride (UF4) which is a precursor to making uranium hexafluoride (UF6), the feed stock for a gas centrifuge. It also has applications in the refining of uranium, the production of fluorine and aluminum fluoride, and as an additive in liquid rocket propellants.

[1](#)5. (S) On 14 January 2008, Emirati officials detained the cargo, and have been holding it ever since (Refs B, C). The UAE does not wish to allow the shipment to continue onward to Iran and as expressed a desire to have the shipment recalled. (Ref D).

[1](#)6. (S) We have received information that the supplier of the AHF is a South Korean firm, the Foo Sung Corporation. We do not know the identity of the Chinese manufacturer of the

chemicals or have information on any other Chinese parties involved in this transaction.

OBJECTIVES

¶7. (S//REL ROK) FOR SEOUL ONLY: Post should seek to achieve the following:

-- Request that the ROKG investigate this transfer and recall the cargo of AHF.

-- Emphasize that United Arab Emirates (UAE) officials are anxious to have the shipment recalled and disposed of as soon as possible, and that ROKG cooperation in this matter will facilitate this effort.

-- Request an ROKG point of contact to share with the UAEG in order to facilitate direct ROKG-UAEG communication.

-- Note our concern that these items could be used in Iran's nuclear program or liquid-fuelled ballistic missile program.

-- Also note that these items could be used in Iran's chemical weapons program, and that this transfer is therefore inconsistent with Australia Group Guidelines.

¶8. (S//REL UAE) FOR ABU DHABI ONLY: Post should seek to achieve the following:

-- Inform UAEG of the involvement of the South Korean firm Foo Sung Corporation in this transfer, and inform the UAEG that we will ask the ROKG to have the shipment recalled.

REPORTING REQUIREMENT

¶9. (U) Please report delivery of points/non-paper and any immediate response by 7 May 2008.

TALKING POINTS/NON-PAPER

¶10. (S//REL ROK) FOR SEOUL ONLY: Begin talking-points/non-paper:

-- We have received information that the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL)-controlled Liberian-flagged M/V ANNA E loaded Chinese-origin anhydrous hydrogen fluoride (AHF) at Laem Chabang, Thailand for delivery to Bandar Abbas, Iran. The vessel, traveling on Persian Container Lines (PCL) voyage number 8237, called at Dubai, United Arab Emirates on 14 January 2008. Final delivery to Bandar Abbas, Iran was scheduled on 15 January 2008.

-- The Thailand-based firm Power Marine Company, Ltd., shipped four 20-foot containers with 56 cylinders of AHF destined for Bandar Abbas, Iran.

-- Emirati authorities detained the shipment in Dubai on 14 January, and are requesting that the shipment be recalled.

-- We have received information indicating the involvement of South Korean firm Foo Sung Corporation in this transfer. The Thai-based firm Power Marine, according to our information, obtained the AHF from the Foo Sung Corporation.

-- Relevant information regarding the Foo Sung Corporation, including the address of its main office and plant, is as follows:

3rd Floor, Seoksoo Building
113-8 Samsung-dong

Kagnam-gu Seoul, Korea
Web site: <http://www.fsc.co.kr>
Telephone: 02-555-8196

-- Foo Sung Corporation's contacts for inorganic fluorine compounds, including AHF, are:

D.H. Hah; dkutc90@foosung.com
K.Y. Oh; penny520@foosung.com

-- The AHF is controlled under the Australia Group and is included in a reprocessing watchlist that the U.S. has shared with Nuclear Suppliers Group participating governments. AHF is a fluorinating agent in organic and inorganic reactions, and a catalyst in alkylation, isomerization, condensation, dehydration, and polymerization reactions.

-- It also has applications in the refining of uranium, the production of fluorine and aluminum fluoride, and as an additive in liquid rocket propellants.

-- Given Iran's long history of proliferation and the diversion of items to support those activities, the United States believes that the ROK should determine that this material would contribute to Iran's proliferation sensitive nuclear activities. Consequently, its transfer to Iran would be prohibited under UNSCR 1737.

-- In light of this information, we request that the Republic of Korea investigate this transfer and take steps to work with the United Arab Emirates to recall this shipment.

-- We would appreciate the ROKG's identification of a point of contact on this case. We would like to share this POC's contact information with the UAEG so that the ROKG and UAEG may begin to communicate directly on this case.

-- We look forward to hearing the results of your investigation.

END POINTS.

11. (U) Washington point of contact for follow-up information is Mark Felipe, (202) 647-5376. Please slug all responses for ISN, T, EAP, and NEA. Washington appreciates Post's assistance.

RICE

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End Cable Text